

Italy to restart AstraZeneca vaccinations Friday: PM

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Italy will resume administering AstraZeneca/Oxford coronavirus vaccines on Friday after the EU's drugs regulator declared them safe, Prime Minister Mario Draghi said.

Italy suspended the use of the jab on Monday, one of a number of European countries taking precautionary action following concerns it

was linked to blood clots.

"The administration of the AstraZeneca [vaccine](#) will resume tomorrow. The government's priority remains to carry out as many vaccinations as possible in the shortest possible time," Draghi said in a statement.

Italy's health regulator AIFA will first have to lift the ban but the [health ministry](#) said it expects AstraZeneca jabs to again be in use from 3:00pm (1400 GMT).

Almost 104,000 people with coronavirus have died in Italy since it swept through the country one year ago, and the [death toll](#) is still rising by hundreds each day.

Draghi's government has said the [vaccination campaign](#), which has had a slow start, is the only way out of the crisis.

It has set a target to triple vaccinations to 500,000 per day by mid-April and to fully vaccinate 80 percent of the population by mid-September.

However, there are fears the AstraZeneca row could strengthen opposition to the campaign in a country where so-called anti-vaxxer sentiment was already widespread.

An EMG institute survey for the Adnkronos news agency published Wednesday asked respondents if the affair had damaged their confidence in vaccines, to which 49 percent answered yes and 49 percent no.

Government sources told AFP this week that the suspension of the AstraZeneca jabs meant around 200,000 fewer vaccinations this week.

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